

January 21, 2003

To: Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

EMANCIPATION SERVICES/INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM QUARTERLY REPORT

On July 17, 2001, your Board instructed my office to oversee a number of activities related to improving the administration of the Emancipation Services/Independent Living Program (ES/ILP). We provided an initial report on our progress on September 26, 2001, a first quarterly status report on January 7, 2002, a second report on April 18, 2002, a third report on July 18, 2002 and a fourth report on October 22, 2002.

The attached report (Attachment I) summarizes the key activities conducted to strengthen the County's ES/ILP program during the last quarter. As outlined in our previous report, the work plan addresses the recommendations from Sharon Watson's August 28, 2001 report on ES/ILP, as well as those of the County Economy and Efficiency Commission's February 2002 report.

The ES/ILP Program redesign work has now been completed and program implementation is well underway. The attached report identifies that significant progress has been made this past quarter. Most notably:

- 4 Transitional Resource Centers (TRCs) will be up and running by the end of this month, with 6 more in the planning stages.
- 12 Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) training sessions have been conducted, to date, with DCFS regional staff and a first-ever conference was held on TILP planning with youth, their caregivers and their caseworkers.

- 138 new transitional housing beds will be operational by July 1, 2003 as a result of a Housing RFP and other efforts. Further, a strategic plan has been developed to double available housing for emancipating and emancipated foster youth over the next three years. An inventory of all existing beds in Los Angeles County has been created (Attachment II).
- The Youth Tracking System Statement of Work has been completed and will be posted on the Los Angeles County Information Technology Support Services Master Agreement (ITSSMA) List by the end of this month.
- The official public launch of the Emancipation Program's Website (www.ilponline.org) is planned for next month. Website flyers and posters are now being widely distributed (Attachment III).
- Emancipation Program staff—including those in the Department of Children and Family Services and Probation—have been consolidated at the new program offices at Wilshire/Normandie.

With all but two of the Interim Team consultants transitioning out by April 2003 and the Team's work almost complete, we will be focusing on negotiating the Operational Agreement between the nine involved County departments. In lieu of a sixth Quarterly Report in April, I will submit a Final Report with an attached Operational Agreement to you in June.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information, or your staff may contact Kathy House at (213) 974-1323.

DEJ:DL
WLW:KH:kd

Attachments

C: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Chief Probation Officer
Interim Director, Children and Family Services
Director, Community and Senior Services
Director, Consumer Affairs
Director, Health Services
Director, Mental Health
Director, Public Social Services
Executive Director, Community Development Commission

DRAFT – January 6, 2003

**EMANCIPATION SERVICES/INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM (ES/ILP)
FIFTH QUARTER STATUS REPORT**

1. Program and Services to Youth:

A. Create a Countywide Network of Alumni Centers:

These Centers have been renamed Transitional Resource Centers (TRCs), as they are now serving emancipating as well as emancipated foster youth.

- Currently, three TRCs are operational—the Pasadena Alumni Support Center (PASC), privately operated by the Casey Family Programs; the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Alumni Resource Center (ARC), which just moved from Culver City to the new Emancipation Program Headquarters in the mid-Wilshire area; and the Mt. San Antonio College (SAC) TRC, which opened in November. Mt. SAC hosted an Open House to celebrate its new partnership with the County and to introduce the TRC to the campus; a second one for the community is planned for early this year. A potluck Thanksgiving dinner was held as well as some modest holiday festivities in December. The Center is now serving young adults who are participants in Mt. SAC's Campus Peer Mentoring Program as well as those who attend Independent Living classes at the college. DCFS and Probation have jointly selected a program manager and operations staff who will assume their new responsibilities on site this month.
- A fourth Center will open this month, pending space approval, at the Community Development Commission's (CDC) Community Resource Center in Whittier. In anticipation of this, a program manager has been selected and DCFS staff are already participating as members of the on site Vision Team. Further, they are engaged in linking parenting teens from the nearby Pathways transitional housing program with services available at the Community Resource Center. Phones and computers have been ordered and County staff should be relocated to the Center by the end of this month. Full operation of the TRC will coincide with the Community Resource Center's five year anniversary celebration in February.
- Collaborative work between DCFS, Probation and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to establish a fifth TRC in Hollywood—one that will focus, specifically, on homeless former foster youth—has begun. Potential private partners for this Center include Persons Assisting the Homeless (PATH), Covenant House or the Los Angeles Free Clinic.

- A City of Long Beach site, an Urban League location in Compton, a CDC/Community and Senior Services (CSS) site in Santa Clarita, and a possible partnership with a new transitional housing program in the Antelope Valley are all currently being evaluated for additional TRCs.

B. Simplify and Strengthen Case Planning for Eligible Youth:

- Comprehensive Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) training for DCFS regional staff began in November, with a total of 19 sessions to be conducted by the end of March. Probation staff will begin receiving this training early this year. The training roll-out will continue throughout 2003 in order to cover every regional office multiple times. This training curriculum features video clips that show foster youth and their caseworkers very effectively engaged in a joint planning session, provides specific instruction on TILP development, offers Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) entry/update information, and includes a detailed handbook that clearly outlines how to complete the required documents and provides samples of well-executed TILPs. This training is a first step in what will need to be an ongoing effort to ensure that transition planning begins at the age of 14, so youth are engaged in planning early enough in their transition to create a better chance of success once out of care.
- A first-ever—and highly successful—"Teamwork Toward Transition...*Getting Ready 4 Real Life*" Conference was held on November 2, 2002 in Torrance. This event brought together teams of youth, their caregivers (foster parents, relative caregivers, group home and foster family agency staff), and their social workers/ Probation Officers. A total of 300 people participated from SPAs 6 and 8. The conference focused on the planning process for emancipating foster youth, how to create a realistic vision, and how to work together to develop a comprehensive TILP. This information mirrored that being presented to staff through the training curriculum described above. A second conference is now being planned for the Spring of 2003, and will include participants from SPA 3 as well as Los Angeles youth placed in either Riverside or San Bernardino counties.
- A new TILP brochure was completed for use at *Getting Ready 4 Real Life* and other stakeholder conferences. It is envisioned that this new brochure will be included in the initial basic information packet that all caregivers receive when youth are placed with them.

C. Develop Mentorship Programs for Eligible Youth, especially those with special needs.

- The “Bridges to the Future” program is now fully underway. This partnership between the Los Angeles County Bar Association and Los Angeles County’s Emancipation Program has recruited approximately 30 mentors to date. Each has committed to at least one year of service and each has been matched with a foster youth who is a high school senior. Two initial trainings have been conducted, with the first group of mentor/ mentee pairs getting together for a kick-off event—a picnic in Griffith Park—in November. The second group will be paired in late January at a bowling party. Aggressive recruitment efforts continue, with program presentations being given at various Bar Association affiliate meetings.
- A Mentor Resource Guide is currently being finalized and will be posted on the Emancipation Program website by the end of this month.
- A Mentoring Business Plan is now being drafted that will include all mentoring initiatives that DCFS and Probation eligible youth are currently involved with or are anticipated to be connected with in the near future.
- In accordance with the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) Interim Team Transition Plan, an Emancipation Program Mentor Coordinator position has been created, within DCFS, with responsibility for overseeing all mentor-related activities for eligible youth, significantly expanding mentoring opportunities and resources for program youth over the next two years, outreaching to and linking with appropriate, community-based mentoring groups, and evaluating which program models work best with which groups of youth.

D. Create a Strong, Integrated, Countywide Housing Program

- Issued an ILP Housing Program Request For Proposals (RFP) in October, through Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA). Funds were made available, over three years, for emergency shelter programs, transitional housing programs and housing search assistance programs across SPAs. Seventeen proposals were received, with eight of these selected for funding. Each of the target groups—youth with mental health issues, youth with substance abuse problems and gay and lesbian youth—will be served by at least one of the selected vendors and new transitional housing will be established in SPAs 1 through 7. A total of 118 new transitional housing beds will be provided, beginning this month, with all slated to come on line by July 2003. Contracts will be prepared and executed by the end of this month. Funds that were budgeted for emergency shelter and for housing search assistance as well as for transitional housing in SPA 8 have been held back, as insufficient proposals were received to meet the needs in these categories. A second RFP issued by LAHSA on January 8, 2003, will specifically address these categories.

- Homes For Life Foundation (HFLF) has now opened two of their three Athena project sites in the San Gabriel Valley (SPA 3) for emancipated foster youth with mental health problems. This project is a model partnership effort of HFLF, DMH, DCFS, and CDC that successfully worked with the Cities of Alhambra and San Gabriel and community residents to find a suitable locations for these three housing programs.
- The Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACOLA), under the CDC, has begun implementing a new program to provide transitional housing for emancipated foster youth at their Carmelitos development in Long Beach. The pilot effort includes four beds.
- The Carmelitos development includes an on-site family resource center through which additional support will be provided to young adults. DCFS is working closely with HACOLA to implement this program and refer young adults; the beds and program will be a part of the DCFS Bridges to Independence Transitional Housing Program, currently supported by HUD Supportive Housing Program funds and ILP funds.
- The DMH was successful in its collaborative effort with the CDC in securing approximately \$2.5 million in HUD Shelter Plus Care program funds that will be used to fund five years of rent assistance, a portion of which will serve 55 emancipated foster youth with mental health disabilities (previously referenced in the July 2002 quarterly report). This program provides funding for permanent, service-enriched housing that is renewable every five years.
- A comprehensive *Plan for Meeting the Housing Needs of Emancipating and Emancipated Foster Youth* has been developed and is now being finalized. It consists of two parts: (1) an assessment of the characteristics and housing needs of emancipating and emancipated foster youth across the County's eight SPAs and (2) the goals, outcomes and implementing programs necessary to address their housing needs. This Plan includes all existing programs and resources available from various County departments, and proposes new programs and the additional resource development required to fully meet the housing needs of emancipating and emancipated foster youth. A draft of the Housing Plan was distributed to Design Team members for review in December and will be ready for distribution at the end of this month.
- Prepared an initial outline of the purpose and multiple uses for a database of housing programs and beds for emancipating and emancipated youth. If fully funded and implemented, this database would provide information on a daily basis

regarding the number and location of all available emergency shelter and transitional housing beds. In addition, the database would be a key source of information for understanding and planning for additional housing needs countywide. After identifying and then reviewing the various designs and effectiveness of several existing housing databases, an initial scope of work for creating and implementing this database was developed. As a first step, a list of existing beds and programs in Los Angeles County has been compiled, which is being updated regularly and widely distributed. To date, there are a total of 915 available beds with another 138 to be operational by July (see Attachment II).

- The Housing Roundtable for Transitioning Youth continues to meet quarterly, now rotating each meeting among SPAs. The most recent meeting was held in November in SPA 8 (South County), with the next meeting planned for the end of January in SPA 3. As part of the CAO Interim Team Transition Plan, the administration and management of the Housing Roundtable has been transferred from the Team to a Steering Committee of representatives from non-profit agencies who regularly participate in the Housing Roundtable. This committee will continue outreach efforts to attract additional housing providers and those interested in becoming providers, develop meeting agendas, distribute relevant information and materials, and prepare meeting summaries.
- Technical assistance is continually provided to developers who are interested in creating housing programs for emancipating and emancipated foster youth. Information and referrals are provided regarding the development process, program design, housing needs, and how to access various funding sources. This assistance included a recent meeting with a developer and staff from Supervisor Burke's office regarding a proposed project for the South Central area of Los Angeles.
- The Los Angeles office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducted an on-site monitoring visit of the County's THP/Bridges Program in September as part of a general review of all grants under their supervision. Based on last Fiscal Year's data, the DCFS Emancipation Services Division was given, on September 30th, a list of several concerns with respect to their grant administration, including the high program vacancy rate and excessive staff turnover within the housing section. DCFS had already submitted their latest set of HUD grant renewal requests, for three of their 11 grants. HUD awarded approximately half of what DCFS asked for in each request. To prevent any further erosion of grant monies, the CAO Interim Team is assisting DCFS in their appeal of this decision and in correcting the program deficiencies underlying HUD's action. In addition, DCFS is working in collaboration with public and private partners to increase the number of available beds in the County THP/Bridges.

- Continuing a dialogue with the State to make the programs established by AB 427—including the Transitional Housing for Foster Youth Fund—viable for Los Angeles County emancipated foster youth. Although the funds authorized by this legislation have been substantially reduced since originally authorized in the Spring of 2001, it would still seem advantageous for Los Angeles County to participate in this much-needed transitional housing resource program as long as we can secure the required match funding through ILP and/or private donations. The California Youth Connection (CYC) and other partners fought hard to secure these housing funds and Design Team members want to ensure that our emancipated foster youth—through our community housing partner agencies—receive its full benefits. Team members are working with both Assembly and CDSS staff to clarify the existing AB 427 regulations to ensure that it is economically possible for Los Angeles County to participate. A letter of interest that will address the funding issues will be prepared by mid-January.

E. Integrate and Expand Youth Employment Programs

We have agreed on an Emancipation Program/CSS partnership whereby the CSS will assume the contracting and monitoring responsibilities for the current ES/ILP Vocational Skills Center Programs. A Board Letter and MOU between DCFS and CSS are now being prepared and targeted for filing by the end of this month. This partnership will enable many more foster youth to receive job readiness and career development services, as well as lengthen their program participation time from the current 2.5 months for pre-emancipated youth to as much as eight years (through their 24th birthday).

2. Administration/Management:

A. Establish a Comprehensive ES/ILP Communications Capacity

- Completed all eight planned Staff Outreach Meetings with DCFS and Probation case workers, supervisors and regional administrators, as well as ES/ILP staff, to preview the emerging Emancipation Program Improvement Plan and seek input on the proposed service delivery changes and staff reorganization.
- Four Design Team Members—Michael Olenick (DCFS' Emancipation Services Chief), David Mitchell (Probation's Emancipation Services Director), Berisha Black (Emancipation Youth Ombudsman), and Heather Jacobson (California Youth Connection)—presented an overview of the new Emancipation Services Program at the New Beginnings Conference on November 15, 2002 to a standing-room-only crowd. Workshop participants were very appreciative of all the program improvements made to date and offered key input about further changes needed.

- The new website, www.ilponline.org, is undergoing final revisions before an official public launch planned for next month. This launch will include: a Kick-Off Reception, Poster, Flyer, Bookmark, Outreach Meetings, Public Service Announcements, etc. Efforts are underway to plan a Board Motion in recognition of this valuable resource. 500 posters and 25,000 flyers have been designed and printed and are now being widely distributed through DCFS, Probation, DMH, the Juvenile Court and other County agencies, as well as the program's private partners. Additional distribution is planned to Transition Resource Centers and Emancipation Program offices, as well as other sites where youth receive services. A copy of the flyer (Attachment III) is attached to this report and posters are available through my office.
- Public viewings of the website were hosted at the New Beginnings and *Getting Ready 4 Real Life* Conferences in November and public comment was sought regarding suggested improvements to the site. As site use increases, so will the need for dialogue with community members on ways to keep the site current and inclusive. As soon as final English-language revisions have been made, the Spanish-language version of the site will be finalized and brought into public view. This is now scheduled for late February. Summary information is also planned in six additional threshold languages - Armenian, Cambodian, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin and Vietnamese. Plans are underway to transition content and technical management of the website from the CAO Interim Team to County staff by May 2003. A team is now being formed and will begin meeting next month to plan a smooth transition and ensure proactive, ongoing site management.
- The Communications/Outreach Plan for FY 2002-03 is now being implemented. A public information presentation on all program benefits is being designed for use by Emancipation Program staff to educate workers, youth and caregivers on the services and supports available to Los Angeles County transitioning youth. New promotional pieces are also planned for inclusion in an updated version of the Resource Directory, as well as a one-page youth-oriented flyer, a bookmark containing key contact information and additional materials for future caregiver conferences.

B. Develop a Data, Reporting and Tracking System for Eligible Youth

The ES/ILP Tracking System Statement of Work, developed under the leadership of the Service Integration Branch (SIB), has been completed. It will be posted on the Los Angeles County Information Technology Support Services Master Agreement (ITSSMA) list by the end of this month, with responses due in February. A vendor selection group has been identified, including representatives from DCFS and Probation. It is anticipated that a vendor will be engaged by the beginning of March,

with work beginning on the project later that month. Now that the CAO Interim Team has essentially completed its work on the Youth Tracking System, an information/technology team—headed by DCFS—has been identified that will assume responsibility for monitoring this project and ensuring its successful implementation.

C. Create a Decentralized, More Timely Check Writing Mechanism for Eligible Youth

We continued to meet with DCFS, Probation and Auditor-Controller (A-C) staff during October to create an ES/ILP check writing capacity at key program sites (Transition Resource Centers, Central Juvenile Hall and Regional Offices). During one of these meetings, it was determined that there was an eight-month backlog of 293 youth reimbursement check requests totaling \$262,660 (excluding room and board assistance requests). Through the extraordinary efforts of the A-C and the DCFS Emancipation and Finance Divisions, this backlog was successfully cleared in record time. The A-C agreed to review the entire check request/issuance process in order to substantially streamline the amount of time it takes for program youth to be properly reimbursed. During this review, A-C staff discovered that DCFS Emancipation Services staff had not complied with County policies and procedures regarding check disbursements. A meeting has been scheduled with CAO Interim Team, A-C and DCFS staff on January 23rd to correct/improve the check issuance process so that we can proceed with expanding the program's check writing capacity.

3. Program Development/Implementation:

A. Re-Design Service Delivery Infrastructure:

- Completed the Emancipation Program staffing reorganization, using existing personnel items, to support the new program's decentralized service delivery infrastructure.
- Consolidated the Emancipation Program's staff—including those in DCFS and Probation—and temporarily re-located them to new offices at Wilshire and Normandie. Staff were assigned space in five separate areas of the office to correspond with the re-designed service delivery structure, presented in the Fourth Quarter Status Report, and to conform with DCFS' recent bureau reorganization. These five areas include: Program Central (which contains key administrative functions for the overall Program) and four regional Hubs—A (SPAs 1 and 2), B (SPAs 3 and 4), C (SPAs 5 and 6), and D (SPAs 7 and 8), which each integrate ILP Transition Specialists and Community Workers with housing, job, education and resource development staff. Hubs A and B comprise DCFS' North Bureau while

Hubs C and D comprise its South Bureau. Organizing space assignments this way will promote faster, more effective team development and accustom staff to a new, more coordinated way of delivering services. As space at regional offices is found for each program hub, that hub will move—as a complete unit—to that location.

4. Design Team/Departmental Transition Plan:

- Beginning this month, two Interim Team Members—the Housing Consultant and the Data/Tracking/Evaluation Consultant—are moving from full-time to half-time status and the Team Coordinator is moving from full-time to quarter-time status. Some of the functions they have been responsible for are being shifted to DCFS, Probation, and CDC staff and, in the case of the Housing Roundtable, to a housing provider Steering Committee.
- A series of meetings have been held between Design Team members and the leadership of the County departments most involved with the Emancipation Program, as well as with some key community partners, to shape the program re-design and begin transition planning:

DCFS – Met with Marge Kelly and John Oppenheim on September 10, 2002 and John Oppenheim participated in the December 3^d Design Team meeting. The Department is fully supportive of the program redesign work and will ensure that Design Team efforts to make this program function optimally are honored.

Probation – Met with Paul Higa and his management staff on September 4, 2002 and held several conversations with Richard Shumsky. The Probation Department appreciates the fact that it is now a fully integrated partner in the Emancipation Program. Probation has agreed to co-locate their Emancipation Services staff with DCFS' at the Wilshire/Normandie office and to fund a full-time housing intake worker, so that up to 60 youth can participate in the County's THP/Bridges Transitional Housing Program. In addition, they have established life skills classes for youth at the Dorothy Kirby Center and at several of their camps.

CSS – Met with Robert Ryans and several of his top staff on September 5, 2002. A partnership was hammered out whereby CSS has agreed to assume responsibility for contracting with, monitoring and evaluating the Emancipation Services Program 13 vocational Skills Centers and linking them to existing CSS Jobs programs.

CDC – Met with Carlos Jackson and his top managers on October 28, 2002. Sealed our partnership with respect to issuing the three-year housing RFP for up to 150 additional beds for emancipated foster youth. CDC also agreed to hire, with ILP funds, a full-time housing staff person that would be loaned to DCFS and oversee all

of the Emancipation Program housing resources, including the 11 HUD grants, and significantly expand these programs. Discussion also included possible use of a CDC mobile unit to house a traveling TRC.

DMH – Met with Marv Southard and Barbara Wallace on November 6, 2002. At this point, DMH agreed to provide up to six full-time mental health staff to support TRCs that become Medi-Cal certified.

Juvenile Court – Met with Judge Michael Nash on December 9, 2002. Judge Nash agreed to distribute ILP packets to all youth, 14 years and older, who appear in court and to distribute posters and flyers to the 47 courts, as well as to the computer lab at the Edelman Children's Court. He also instructed his judicial officers to ensure all court reports, for youth ages 14 and older, include a TILP and a listing of the services offered and received by eligible youth.

Alliance for Children's Rights – Met with the new Executive Director and her top staff on December 3, 2002. They agreed to seek private funding to provide legal clinics at each of the TRCs as well as at major transitional housing sites.

Casey Family Programs – Met with the new Western Division Director and Los Angeles Office Administrative staff on September 16, 2002. Cemented our partnership in the wake of that Foundation's extensive reorganization and downsizing. They agreed to make every attempt to keep PASC open and fully operational and offered to provide some training resources for emancipation services staff. CFP also offered to provide a youth assessment tool that they have developed which could be used by the Emancipation Program to satisfy the new state ILP regulations.